

HARMONIOUS OPPOSITES

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1973 Word Ways articles by Mary J. Youngquist and R. Robinson Rowe have taken pairs of words opposite in meaning and scrambled them into phrases or sentences unrelated to the original words in meaning. The problem presented to solvers has been to unscramble them and find the original pairs.

A careful examination of the scrambles reveals the fact that there is something odd about them. First of all, the obvious goal of such scrambling should be to produce words, names, or other dictionary entries, real or at least simulated. Yet, of the 100 original scrambles in these two articles, only one has achieved this goal -- SOU' WESTER. Surely, it ought to be possible to do better than that!

Naturally, not all pairs can be scrambled so successfully. If it is impossible to achieve the highest level of success, one must turn to a secondary goal: scrambling the opposites into phrases or sentences that are both meaningful and cohesive. The authors of the two previous articles have displayed a remarkable indifference to this secondary goal, the attainment of which is mandatory. Because this secondary goal can always be achieved, failing to reach it is not logologically acceptable.

Many or most of the original 100 scrambles exhibit faulty grammar, deliberate misspellings, an excess of internal punctuation, invented names, extreme tenuousness of thought or even a complete absence of thought, and related defects.

It need not be so. To substantiate my view, I have taken 100 brand-new pairs of opposites, scrambling them properly. The new scrambles are presented below. The correct solutions are to be found in Answers and Solutions at the end of this issue.

The scrambles are arranged in order of letter length, beginning with the shortest ones (four letters) and ending with the longest ones (fourteen letters). The greater the number of letters in a pair of opposites, the easier it is to turn them into an acceptable scramble, but the more difficult it is for the solver to find the original words. For both reasons, I have stopped at the fourteen-letter level.

Those scrambles representing genuine dictionary entries -- there are 24 of them -- are indicated by means of a single asterisk. Those

scrambles representing simulated dictionary entries -- there are 17 of them -- are indicated by a double asterisk. Accordingly, 41 of the 100 scrambles have reached the primary goal. The remaining 59 scrambles have achieved the secondary goal of being both meaningful and cohesive: they involve a minimum of proper names and of internal punctuation, and both grammar and spelling are perfect.

Which is the most difficult scramble to solve? In my opinion, it is number 95.

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|-----------------|-------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1. daze* | 34. old fines | 68. mere devils |
| 2. heat* | 35. she has to! | 69. reputed oil |
| 3. arise* | 36. song data | 70. see the shot! |
| 4. nosey* | 37. tie a crew | 71. swear or lie |
| 5. radon* | 38. tie maces | 72. watch Edsel |
| 6. Albert* | 39. forefined** | 73. stepparents* |
| 7. germal* | 40. impactees** | 74. a final creed |
| 8. Lowden* | 41. lead mines** | 75. a popish deer |
| 9. too new | 42. pavedness** | 76. "die!" I sing out |
| 10. ion trap * | 43. semifloor** | 77. his elf trips! |
| 11. lewison* | 44. a thief led | 78. offer a beret |
| 12. overmen* | 45. a wet rider | 79. rice vendees |
| 13. a desman | 46. damn dudes! | 80. seat marvels! |
| 14. Pa swore | 47. deck a land | 81. see hell, Dora! |
| 15. spurt on! | 48. hated fens | 82. ten dour hags |
| 16. befriend* | 49. lace lions! | 83. tribes tweet |
| 17. doweling* | 50. plow earth | 84. true antlers |
| 18. foldouts* | 51. the morons | 85. war on litter! |
| 19. genderer* | 52. wares sank | 86. yet so proper |
| 20. oversaid* | 53. yes, I mourn | 87. counterseals* |
| 21. Parkdale* | 54. heart lines* | 88. superconduit** |
| 22. tail ends* | 55. insect care** | 89. uncoiledness** |
| 23. ten-armed* | 56. rebateward** | 90. a Nepali purse |
| 24. wardlike* | 57. rum-browned** | 91. I hate rooters |
| 25. flailers** | 58. twin lakers** | 92. inexact rente |
| 26. hut tiler** | 59. world-borne* | 93. pure hit shows |
| 27. name tabs** | 60. a deep curse | 94. gremlin-raised** |
| 28. subyield** | 61. a supertuft | 95. star-promising** |
| 29. a red knit | 62. bandy clips! | 96. ogle not a three |
| 30. arm maids! | 63. can a pin fly? | 97. shiver, entente! |
| 31. a shy dear | 64. err on <u>those</u> | 98. to finger a vine |
| 32. fen dikes | 65. fast oaring | 99. a created tavern |
| 33. lot ached | 66. field crime | 100. I swear tar is wet! |
| | 67. madly cured | |